CLAIMS:

We claim:

1. A method for collectively tracking a lost, misplaced or stolen personal article comprising the steps of:

distributing a plurality of tracking processors to corresponding subscribers in a personal article tracking community;

receiving an indication from one of said subscribers in said community that a personal article having a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag has fallen out of range of a tracking processor associated with said one of said subscribers;

forwarding an identifier for said RFID tag to other subscribers in said community; and,

receiving notification from at least one of said other subscribers that said RFID tag has been sensed in proximity to a tracking processor coupled to said at least one of said other subscribers.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

identifying a geographic position for said at least one of said other subscribers when said at least one of said other subscribers provides notification that said RFID tag has been sensed; and,

forwarding said position to said one of said subscribers.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of initiating an audible alert to said at least one of said other subscribers when said RFID tag is sensed.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said distributing step further comprises the step of establishing stationary tracking processors within a fixed region in which a personal article is to be bound.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of coupling said personal article to a child.

6. A method for collectively tracking a lost, misplaced or stolen personal article comprising the steps of:

receiving an alert specifying tag data for a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag associated with a lost, misplaced or stolen personal article;

sensing a plurality of proximate RFID tags having respective coupled personal articles;

matching said specified tag data to tag data associated with said sensed proximate RFID tags; and,

if a particular one of said sensed proximate RFID tags has tag data which matches said specified tag data, responding to said alert with a notification that said lost, misplaced or stolen personal article has been located.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said responding step further comprises the steps of:

determining an approximate geographic position for said lost, misplaced or stolen personal article; and,

including said position in said notification.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein said responding step further comprises the step of including contact information in said notification.

9. A collective system for tracking a personal article comprising:

at least one radio frequency identification (RFID) tag affixed to a personal article;

a plurality of RFID tracking processors coupled to a corresponding plurality of pervasive devices managed by a corresponding plurality of subscribers; and,

a central command communicatively coupled to said pervasive devices.

10. The system of claim 9, further comprising at least one RFID tracking processor disposed at a stationary location within a fixed region.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein said stationary location comprises location selected from the group consisting of a point of egress and a kiosk.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein said fixed region comprises a region selected from the group consisting of a shopping mall, an amusement park, an airport, a bus station, and a train station.

13. The system of claim 10, wherein said personal article comprises a wearable article worn by a child.

14. The system of claim 10, wherein said personal article comprises a stroller.

15. A machine readable storage having stored thereon a computer program for collectively tracking a lost, misplaced or stolen personal article, the computer program comprising a routine set of instructions for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

receiving an alert specifying tag data for a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag associated with a lost, misplaced or stolen personal article;

sensing a plurality of proximate RFID tags having respective coupled personal articles;

matching said specified tag data to tag data associated with said sensed proximate RFID tags; and,

if a particular one of said sensed proximate RFID tags has tag data which matches said specified tag data, responding to said alert with a notification that said lost, misplaced or stolen personal article has been located.

16. The machine readable storage of claim 15, wherein said responding step further comprises the steps of:

determining an approximate geographic position for said lost, misplaced or stolen personal article; and,

including said position in said notification.

17. The machine readable storage of claim 15, wherein said responding step further comprises the step of including contact information in said notification.